

Feeling Small by orphan_account

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Summary:

Will is insecure, and Mike is quite content to try and make him feel better. Sweetness ensues.

Feeling Small

Author's Note:

"It's older work, sir, but it checks out."

This was the original work that inspired the series.
It's just set really late on! Enjoy.

April 23rd, 1990

Will was quiet tonight, Mike noticed. Not that Will ever talked at quite the length that he did, of course, but he was particularly reserved this evening. It was a cool spring evening, and both boys were back in Hawkins for spring break. They were spending practically every waking moment in each other's company; having communicated almost entirely by letters since New Year's, they had missed each other desperately, and were finding almost any excuse to be together. Tonight they were minding Holly, even though Mike's ten-year-old sister claimed she was old enough to look after herself whilst their parents were out. "I'm not a *baby!*" she had retorted when Mike told her it was time to go to bed. Now, however, Will was washing the dishes, seemingly on autopilot.

"Will?" Mike ventured. His boyfriend jumped and dropped the spoon he was cleaning into the dishwasher, splashing his shirt. "Everything okay?"

"Yeah, fine," he lied as he plunged his arm into the water to retrieve it.

"Is it because of what Mom said?" Mike said. Will frowned, and Mike knew he'd hit the nail on the head.

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Three hours earlier, Will had arrived at the Wheelers' house to join Mike in looking after Holly. Upon opening the door, Mrs Wheeler had opened the door, flashing a smile at her son's best friend.

"Hi, Will, come in. Thanks for doing this, you really don't have to –

Mike can manage quite well by himself.” Will shrugged and smiled.

“It’s fine, I don’t mind. It’ll be fun.”

“Well, thanks all the same,” she continued, putting on her gloves, even though it wasn’t particularly cold. “Mike, Will’s here! Ted, we need to go! Now, in case Mike forgets, Holly needs to go to bed some time between eight and eight-thirty, or she’ll be tired tomorrow.”

“Got it.”

“There’s fresh lemonade in the fridge, and I made you boys some cookies.”

“Thanks, Mrs Wheeler!”

“Think nothing of it, dear. They’re in the cupboard on the top shelf, so that Holly doesn’t find them, but you can ask Mike to get them for you. Ted?” She looked around the hall, failing to notice the irritated expression on Will’s face. “Anything else..? No, I think that’s it. TED!” she called up the stairs, and sucked in her cheeks at the muted response that came from above. “Have a good evening, sweetie.” A clatter of footsteps grew louder and Mike appeared at the foot of the stairs, stumbling slightly as he came in to land.

“Hi,” he said, slightly breathlessly, but he grimaced as his mother planted a kiss on his cheek, and scowled as his father walked past as if he wasn’t there. In a whirlwind of coats Mike’s parents were gone, and the two boys were left alone. Immediately Mike closed the gap between them and wrapped his arms around Will, gently kissing his forehead. “I missed you,” he breathed.

Will gave a snuffle of a laugh and looked up at him. “I saw you yesterday,” he said fondly.

“Too long,” he said mournfully, but his eyes were creased in the corners. Will tilted his face up to kiss Mike properly, but at that moment they heard another set of footsteps descending the staircase and sprang apart like they’d been stung.

“Mike, will you show me how Nancy makes her hair all curly?” Holly asked, smiling innocently up at them.

“Why?” was Mike’s suspicious reply.

“Because it’s pretty,” she said, like it was obvious.

“Well, tough luck, because I don’t know how.”

“I do,” Will piped up, and flushed at Mike’s astonished face. “I mean, I’ve seen your sister curl her hair when she’s, ah, stayed over.” Mike grimaced again. He really did not need to imagine his sister and Will’s brother doing it. “But I think I can remember,” Will hastily continued. “Come on, Holly.” And that was that. Damn, thought Mike. Why do I always seem to have a younger sister when Will wants to kiss me? He rolled his eyes and followed them upstairs.

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“You know she meant nothing by it,” Mike said encouragingly. “She can be blunt sometimes, and it’s a fact that, well, you can’t reach the top shelf without a stepladder.”

“That’s not the point,” Will snapped. “I just get sick of it. All through middle school, then high school, I’ve always been inches shorter than everyone else. Now at college people ask me if I’m some kind of child prodigy. I swear they think I’m about fourteen.” He exhaled deeply. “It just annoys me when someone like your mom points it out like it doesn’t matter.” He yanked the plug out of the sink, pulled off the rubber gloves and threw them onto the counter.

“Come here,” Mike said gently. Will shuffled closer, still cross, as Mike pulled him close to him. Will turned his head and buried his face in the fabric of Mike’s sweater, as Mike lifted his chin and rested his head on the top of Will’s. “I love you, okay?” He felt Will nod.

“Love you too,” he said indistinctly. Mike felt his boyfriend shift his weight and looked down into his face, taking in the details he had missed so much over the last four months and struggled to fight back the smile that was forcing its way out of him. “What?” Will frowned, scrunching his nose.

“You’re adorable,” murmured Mike, closing his eyes and leaning down to kiss him. Will pressed in closer, safe and loved in Mike’s

arms.